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Warriors, Hunters, and Bruce Lee:

Gendered agency and the transformation of Amazonian masculinity

Abstract

This article examines the ways in which young Waorani men in Amazonian Ecuador express specific generational forms of masculinity in reference to past violence, urban inter-cultural relations and global film imagery. By drawing on Amazonian and anthropological conceptualizations of “gendered agency”, I consider how emerging masculine fantasies point to young men’s reduced ability to demonstrate particular forms of agency associated with male elders and ancestors. I suggest that a Waorani “masculinity crisis” in the wake of social and economic transformation has not led to the gendered antagonisms and violence toward women familiar to studies of “hegemonic” masculinities. [masculinity, gender, agency, violence, Amazonian Ecuador, Waorani]

Introduction

In contrast to studies of gender that focus on power and inequality in hegemonic forms of masculinity, ethnographies of Amazonia have generally emphasized a lack of strict gendered hierarchies and pronounced divisions between women and men. It is striking that gender has only recently become a major topic of debate in regional anthropology (Gregor and Tuzin 2001; Knauft 1997; McCallum 2001). As Philippe Descola (2001) has suggested, in Amazonia gender differences appear to be secondary to broader relations between humans and nonhumans and between consanguinity and affinity. Perhaps as a result, Amazonian gender relations have rarely been described through the lens of a critical feminist anthropology. And yet, Amazonianist anthropology has arguably become

best known to other researchers and the public through prominent ethnographies in which specific cultural forms of masculine warriorhood take centre stage. Nowhere is this clearer than in Napoleon Chagnon's famous and controversial ethnography on Yanomami warfare, *The Fierce People* (Chagnon 1968). It appears that in his book, and in the growing literature on violence and alterity in Amazonian cosmology (Fausto 2001; Taylor 1993; Viveiros de Castro 1992), questions about how specifically Amazonian forms of manhood are envisioned and achieved by men have yet to be fully addressed in terms of anthropological debates about gender and masculinity.

In this article I explore the ways in which masculinity is produced and transformed among the Waorani, an indigenous people of Amazonian Ecuador, who have been described as an example of both "egalitarian" gender relations and extreme "tribal warfare". I examine how young men negotiate their position within their own communities and in relation to other Ecuadorians in the context of dramatic changes in warfare and hunting practices, engagement with mass-media imagery, and popular colonial stereotypes about Amazonian Indians. I argue that Waorani masculinities can be best understood today not only in terms of current discussions of gender and the body in Amazonian anthropology, but also in the context of urban inter-ethnic relations and the new kinds of manhood that these translocal encounters make imaginable. I suggest that it is at the intersection of Waorani, Ecuadorian and broader translocal imagery of violence that specific generational forms of masculinity are produced. By considering indigenous understandings of gender and agency, this article raises questions about why, in the context of social and economic transformations, emergent masculinities do not necessarily lead to the forms of gender antagonism often described by anthropologists.

I build on previous work that addresses how the symbolic force of Amazonian Indians in global imagination has become part of the lived world of indigenous people themselves (Conklin 1997; Graham 2005). However, instead of focussing on the broader ethnic “identity politics” described in much of the recent literature on indigenous political representation (Ramos 1998; Warren and Jackson 2002), I examine how young Waorani men construct generational forms of masculinity in reference to local narratives about the past and popular Ecuadorian images of the Amazonian “Wildman” (*auca*). I consider how, in the aftermath of inter-group violence and missionary “pacification”, they express masculinity when forms of manhood associated with older men appear to be either unachievable or illegitimate within contemporary Waorani communities. Whereas older adults frequently draw on contrasts between past warfare practices and present sociality, imagery ranging from the “wild” Indian warrior in the national imagination to Bruce Lee and Rambo in popular film have become part of the production of contemporary masculinity. This is not because indigenous Amazonian men (or men in general) have a universal need to express violence or antagonistic gender relations, but because multiple and contrasting forms of masculine warriorhood comprise an important element of the cultural imagination produced at the intersection of Waorani and mestizo people.¹

Masculinity and Gendered Agency in Amazonia

In a recent volume on men and masculinities, Matthew Gutmann describes how much of the scholarship on Latin America adopts a critical feminist approach to sexuality and “hegemonic masculinity”, examining machismo, misogyny and homophobia as dominant ideological expressions of gender inequality (2004:3). More generally, scholars have

pointed to how hegemonic forms of Western gender hierarchy that naturalize male domination are becoming increasingly global insofar as they are inscribed within a wide range of political and economic relationships beyond the control of local communities (Moore 1994: 63). Anthropologists who focus on men as a specific gendered category tend to emphasise issues of power, gender inequality and the ways in which new “masculinity crises” emerge in the wake of social and economic change (Bourgois 1995; Knauff 1997; Perry 2005). In many of these cases, the perceived or actual loss of male authority leads to new forms of gender antagonism and violence toward women.

While we might view the experiences of young Waorani men as an example of this broader masculinity crisis, in this article I examine Amazonian ways of distinguishing oneself “as a man” that are not centrally about issues of sexuality or the inequalities between men and women typically described in studies of masculinity. I instead consider how, in an indigenous society described as generally egalitarian, masculinities are constructed in relation to imagery of violence drawn from local oral histories and increasingly global sources. I argue that Amazonian research stands to benefit from broader anthropological perspectives in which “the gender experiences of men” are understood not only in terms of their sex, but also in relation to wider class, ethnic and generational categories (Viveros Vigoya 2004:52). In this sense, if Waorani masculinity is indeed “in crisis”, it should be understood in the context of indigenous understandings of personhood and sociality, as well as translocal imagery and discourses. Anthropological theorizations of the postcolonial subject have rightly pointed to the importance of examining gender within political and economic changes beyond the local (Moore 1994). However, I question the notion that a “global hegemonic masculinity”

orders gender relations in a way that necessarily leads to male violence against women. I suggest that the masculine fantasies of young Waorani men draw more on generational differences between men than gender antagonisms between men and women.

While some anthropologists working in Amazonia have noted aspects of gender antagonism and inequality (Bamberger 1974; Gregor 1985; Murphy and Murphy 1985), most prioritise the constitution of personhood, the body, and broader relations of alterity over those between men and women. Although myth, ritual and notions of the body often draw on gendered symbolism, Descola argues that “the sexual division of labor is not based on a native discriminatory theory that would rank activities on a scale of prestige according to whether they are performed by men or women” (2001:97). This view is consistent with the more general regional emphasis on egalitarianism and the collective production of consanguinity through shared consumption and everyday sociality (Gow 1991; Overing 1983; Overing and Passes 2000; Rival 1998). Cecilia McCallum (2001) challenges the very notion that gendered relations in Amazonia can be characterized as a form of “hegemonic masculinity”, instead framing Amazonian sociality in terms of non-dominant male and female agencies located in the body. She argues that since Amazonian cosmology posits a “unitary human identity” rather than “multiple gender identities inferred from a set of distinct subject positions” (McCallum 2001:165), sociality is not as much about producing women and men as it is about producing bodies and persons.

While several authors appear to agree that gender (as a unitary identity) is marginal in Amazonia, recent works distinguish between masculine and feminine “agencies”. From this perspective, women are transformers of forest and garden products in the domestic sphere of consanguinity, while men are seen to have a predatory

relationship with various “others” through hunting, warfare and affinal relations (Taylor 1983; Viveiros de Castro 2001). The notion of gendered agency that I adopt in this article, however, refers not just to the gendered identities or actual roles of women and men, but also the underlying cosmology that attributes distinct capacities and symbolic values to male and female bodies. This formulation resonates with McCallum’s argument that gender in Amazonia should be seen as “an epistemological condition for social action” embodied as male or female agency (McCallum 2001:5).² Understanding Waorani masculinities requires attention to how specific embodied processes attributed to men and women enable particular roles, capacities and relations, and how these processes change from one generation to the next.

In recent years agency has been addressed from a seemingly limitless number of theoretical and disciplinary perspectives. These include discussions of intentionality and consciousness, knowledge and power (Kockelman 2007), performance, effect and the encoding of agency in language (Duranti 2004), and relations between human and non-human entities (Latour 2005; Teubner 2006) – to name but a few. Anthropologists have contributed to this discussion by recognizing how agency is central to broader narratives of modernity that draw on the “emancipated subject” in Christian theology and liberal humanist philosophy (Keane 2007:5), and caution against the tendency to analyze gender relations ethnographically in terms of western notions of moral autonomy and self-realization (Mahmood 2004). In response to the dominant notion in subaltern studies that agency is performed or expressed in individual actions against “tradition” or “custom”, Saba Mahmood follows Foucault in identifying agency not as something that “belongs” to individuals themselves, but as “a product of the historically contingent discursive

traditions in which they are located” (Mahmood 2004:32). In this sense, we should be open to exploring diverse cultural forms of agency that are located and expressed in ways that diverge significantly from the liberal philosophical tradition. In this article I draw on these critiques in resisting the temptation to assimilate Amazonian notions of gendered agency to a “liberating” moral narrative of modernity familiar to anthropologists. I instead focus on the interface between Waorani logics of masculine and feminine agency and “hegemonic” forms of masculinity in mainstream Ecuadorian society.

By drawing on Amazonian conceptualizations of gender and agency, this article examines the production of specific generational forms of masculinity. Even if personhood can be seen as ontologically prior to gendered differences in Amazonia, the increasingly global masculine “fantasies” described by gender theorists (Connell 1995; Moore 1994:58) have become an important part of the gendered categories through which Waorani masculinities are constructed and performed. I challenge the tendency to isolate specific “Amazonian” forms of sociality and cosmology from the broader political, economic and gendered relations in which they engage with non-indigenous people. How, for example, might Amazonian notions of gendered agency help illuminate the ways in which Waorani youth interact with mestizos in urban areas? How do Waorani men become “engendered” in the context of multiple and contradictory gender discourses? Understanding these processes requires viewing masculinity not as fixed in time, but instead as constantly produced and remade in a dynamic process of historical transformation (Hodgson 1999). It is precisely in the context of translocal relations between Waorani and various “others” that these transformations can be best understood.

Victims and Killers: Imagining the Waorani

The Waorani people described here inhabit a vast area of rain forest in eastern Ecuador and speak an indigenous language (*Wao-terero*) that is unrelated to other South American languages. Their subsistence economy is based primarily on hunting, gathering and gardening on their official ethnic reserve of more than one million acres between the Napo and Curaray rivers. Most of the total population of about 2,000 Waorani reside in more than thirty villages, many of which have airstrips and state-run schools. While the past four decades have marked a dramatic transition from highly dispersed and nomadic households to larger and more permanent settlements, their long treks in the forest, residential movement between villages, and temporary migration for employment with oil companies operating within the reserve continue to constitute a mobile way of life.

Anthropological and missionary writings have emphasized Waorani isolation from other indigenous groups until the 1950s and their famous spear-killing raids between household groups and against outsiders. The earliest ethnographic accounts describe a society on the verge of disappearance prior to mission settlement, primarily as a result of an intense cycle of internal revenge killings (Yost 1981). While the cause of this violence has been debated from ethno-psychological (Robarchek and Robarchek 1998), historical (Cipolletti 2002) and sociobiological (Beckerman and Yost 2007) perspectives, it is clear that Waorani people envisioned their conflicts with “outsiders” (described by Waorani as *cohuori*) as a relationship of predation. Still today, older adults describe how they once feared that all *cohuori* people were cannibals intent on killing and eating them. This is part of a broader Waorani logic that locates personhood in the position of the victim or “prey” to outside aggression (Rival 2002). Oral histories and

commentaries about contemporary relations with *cohuori* tend to emphasize Waorani victimhood in the face of powerful outsiders, even after the dramatic decrease in violence since mission settlement in the 1960s. As in previous times, the household (*nanicabo*) and a tightly knit endogamous group of closely related households (*waomoni*) remain the primary units of social organization, even in large villages with as many as 200 residents. And yet, in recent decades missionaries, local schools, oil development and tourism have made relations between Waorani and *cohuori* people increasingly frequent and varied.

In part as a result of their reputation for isolation and spear-killing, the Waorani have held a prominent place in popular Ecuadorian imagination since the first half of the 20th century. At various historical moments, they have been represented in popular media as enemies of Christianity, obstacles to the state and modern development, and pristine ecological Indians who defend the rain forest from intruders (Rival 1994). Until recently they were referred to as *aucas*, a derogatory term meaning “wild”, “savage” or “enemy” in Kichwa, the dominant language of indigenous Ecuador.³ This social categorization was amplified in 1956 when five North American missionaries were killed in an attempt to establish an evangelical mission among the Waorani.⁴ In the years following the killings, Waorani became the target of an intensive evangelical mission campaign by the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL).⁵ During the missionary period, which lasted until the SIL was expelled from Ecuador in 1981 (Stoll 1982), internal revenge killings and violence toward outsiders decreased dramatically.

While the Waorani continue to be viewed in Ecuador as “wild” forest-dwelling Indians, missionary activity, national education, oil company employment and inter-ethnic marriages place them in direct relations with national and global processes. The

establishment of an official political organization to represent Waorani interests in the regional capital in 1990 has coincided with a steady increase in Waorani migration to the city.⁶ While this began with the temporary urban migration of almost exclusively young male political leaders from remote Waorani villages, today many of these men are accompanied by their spouses, children and a growing number of friends and relatives. Whether in local schools, oil camps or cities dominated by mestizo Ecuadorians, non-indigenous people and ideas have become an important part of Waorani social life, especially for young people. Below I examine how Waorani ideas about gender and sociality should be understood within this context of interaction, which highlights the tensions and intercultural imagination we encounter in contemporary Waorani masculinities. My discussion of “young men” refers to a broad category of Waorani males, including teenage students at village schools, as well as married and unmarried men in their mid to late twenties. What is central to this categorization is not exact age or marital status, but rather the specific generational experiences of men who are compared to the hunting and warfare practices of their elders and ancestors.⁷

It is no surprise that, given the intensity of revenge killings between Waorani groups in much of the 20th century, violence is an important part of local social memory. Oral histories often consist of impassioned and detailed accounts of how people were killed in the past. These stories are almost always told from the victim’s point of view, describing in detail what the victim was doing, thinking, or even dreaming during and prior to a spear-killing raid. Being victims or “prey” to violence is central to Waorani conceptualisations of personhood and group identity. I have suggested elsewhere that by narrating the past from the victim’s point of view, individuals lay claim to a specific

moral identity in relation to their household and wider community, which today increasingly incorporates people from rival families and other indigenous groups through marriage - one of the key changes that came with the mission settlement (High 2006).

If the current emphasis Waorani people place on victimhood resonates closely with the notion of predation common to many recent studies of Amazonia (Fausto 2007), it is important to also recognise the gendered dimensions of Amerindian cosmology (Rival 2005; Walker 2009). Men and women are not positioned in relation to predation in the same ways, even in a society in which the self is distinguished as “prey” to predatory “others”. While Waorani men and women generally have equal social status, an important gendered difference emerges insofar as men are seen as susceptible to being overtaken by the non-human “predatory” desire to kill. Laura Rival suggests that this is because men’s “souls” are seen as less firmly attached to the body than are those of women, allowing the perspective of predatory spirits to control their minds and bodies (2005:296). There is always the risk that a man who is overcome by anger (*pii*) after the death of a kinsman may himself become a predator, leading him to kill enemies or even members of his own household. While elders explain that men, women and children died in past spear-killing raids, it was most often men who were targeted in these revenge killings.⁸ Whether in these oral histories or in commenting on contemporary marital relations, women are rarely singled out as a specific target of male violence.

Marriage practices are characteristic of the “brideservice model” described by Collier and Rosaldo (1981), in which marriage does not involve a direct exchange or pooling of resources. However, whereas the brideservice model suggests that conflicts and inequalities are generated by men’s attempts to assert their rights over women

(Collier 1988), such occurrences are rare in Waorani communities. The general absence of spousal abuse and gender hierarchy, coupled with the flexibility and informality of most gendered roles, have contributed to descriptions of the Waorani as a highly egalitarian society (Rival 2002). Whereas women reside in their natal homes after marriage and are associated with processes of regeneration and familiarization, a man ideally distances himself from his natal household, eventually to be incorporated into his wife's group through uxorilocal marriage. Waorani adults describe marriage as a productive relationship between women and men that is closely linked to having children and the collective consumption of abundant food through mutual support. This ideal is voiced at wedding ceremonies in which elders sing loudly to remind the bride and groom of their expected roles. It can also be seen in couvade practices in which men and women are expected to share dietary restrictions during and after pregnancy (Rival 1998). While many marriages are arranged by elders and a much smaller number are polygamous, marital relations are generally stable and amicable.⁹

Durani Bai: Hunting, Killing and Masculinity

Being a victim in the face of outside aggression is a central part of what it means to be a Waorani person. However, many young people who listen to accounts of past violence do not always look critically upon practices they associate with previous generations. It is not uncommon to hear male teenagers openly admire their elders and ancestors for their perceived autonomy, strength and ability to kill. During my fieldwork they frequently praised the few Waorani groups who continue to refuse village settlement and peaceful relations with *cohuori* outsiders, describing them as fearless and able to kill people by throwing spears from long distances.

The bravery, hostility and autonomy that Waorani people see in older men who themselves have killed in the past is evoked by the expression *durani bai*, meaning “like the ancient ones”. Members of my host family often used this expression to describe particular objects and actions associated with the past or in reference to previous generations and so-called “uncontacted” groups (*tagaeri*).¹⁰ Blowguns, spears, gourd bowls, ceramic pots and other locally produced objects are described as *durani bai*, as are specific practices, such as traditional group dances and singing. Talk of this sort can often be heard at inter-village feasts (*eëme*) where people consume large amounts of manioc beer and game meat, dance and sing late into the night. In everyday life, *durani bai* is offered as an approving response to activities associated with past times of abundance. An elderly woman used this expression in describing to me a feast she attended in a distant village where the hosts provided enough food for guests to return home with extra monkey meat. For young men, it is a common way of asserting one’s own abilities and achievements in continuity with previous generations.

One practice that is closely linked to the idea of *durani bai*, and is seldom observed in Waorani households today, is the whipping (*pangi*) of children with a jungle vine after successful peccary hunts. When talking about their childhood, men and women recall how they suffered from the painful lashes they received from their fathers and grandfathers. On several occasions elders explained to me that this practice made children strong enough to hunt peccaries themselves one day. Beyond ascribing a role specifically to male elders, these explanations suggest that whipping is seen as a way of transmitting knowledge or ability from one person to another through bodily practices. In a parallel example, described by a missionary in the late 1950s, one of the first Waorani

men to be brought by missionaries to a large Ecuadorian town commented that he wished to be beaten by a tractor driver so that he would acquire the ability to use the machinery in his home village (Wallis 1960:256). Being subjected to physical beatings thus not only enables children to acquire the skills of adults, but also reflects a more general Amazonian conceptualization of the “physical creation of social qualities through bodily states” (Fisher 2001:122). Rather than being a form of punishment to correct misbehaviour, the whipping of children reveals a particular understanding that bodily experiences constitute the acquisition of specific kinds of knowledge and agency.¹¹

Although Waorani elders say that they stopped whipping children during the missionary period, this practice appears to be central to the construction of gendered and generational relations. Parents lament that the current generation of boys and girls is weaker than previous ones, who they describe as stronger and better able to withstand long treks in the forest. Elders explain that this deficiency is a consequence of children today not having been whipped like past generations. The resulting lack of embodied knowledge appears to have had a particularly strong impact on young men, who are said to be unable to hunt peccaries with spears. Given the value placed on peccary hunting and its association with whipping children, it was difficult for me to see why most people abandoned the practice. When I asked the senior man in my host family why he does not whip his children, he responded that young people today cannot withstand the whippings since they eat too much “foreign food” (*cohuori kengi*), referring to the rice, noodles, oatmeal and other features of the lunches supplied by local schools. He explained that, as a result, their arms and legs are too weak and would break from the whipping.¹²

This idea that people, and particularly men, are becoming physically and culturally deficient as a result of changing ritual practices resonates with Conklin's work in Brazil with the Wari, who say that previous generations of men grew larger, stronger and more capable than men today who never experienced specific enemy-killing rites after warfare. What becomes clear in both of these cases is that men are seen as unable to "actualize their masculine potential" (Conklin 2001:155) as a result of not experiencing specific bodily transformations. In contexts like these, the perceived problem is not just that men today are failing to fulfil their expected gendered roles, but also that they lack specific embodied capacities attributed to previous generations of men. Whereas younger Waorani generations are seen as being less "hard" or "strong" (*teemo*) than elders, the few remaining "uncontacted" groups are said to have remarkable physical abilities due to their strict diet of "Waorani" foods and because, in contrast to "civilized" Waorani who became Christian and today live in villages, they continue to whip their children. Such an understanding of how knowledge and agency depend on specific embodied practices has important consequences for the ways in which young men today envision their own masculinity. The following life histories of men from different generations points to the generational shifts in Waorani masculinities:¹³

Pego was born in the 1930s in the eastern part of the Waorani territory, where his father was killed in a series of revenge killings with other Waorani groups. Pego describes how he was brutally whipped as a child by his senior kin and as a result became an expert hunter of monkeys, birds and peccaries at an early age. As a young man he married a woman he abducted in a raid against an enemy group. In the late 1960s Pego and his wife

joined the missionary settlement, where they lived for several years and had four children. In the late 1970s they joined several other families to establish a new village where they have remained intermittently ever since. Pego often voices his frustrations about the noisiness of village life. He regularly goes on hunting trips alone for weeks at a time and has built a hunting lodge about a day's walk away from the village. He also makes extended visits to his ancestral territory far to the east, where he says he enjoys better hunting, visits with relatives, and food gifts from oil companies operating in the area. An old and gregarious man, Pego complains that young men spend too much time in the cities, where their laziness and diet causes them to become 'like outsiders' (*cohuori bai*). Yet he also asks his grown children to bring him manufactured goods and medicines when they visit urban areas and is known to block oil roads on Waorani lands with felled trees, demanding that oil workers provide him food and other gifts. When in the village, Pego and his wife live in the household group of his oldest son, Wareka.

Wareka, who is in his late 30s, grew up on the mission and later attended a missionary school in town for about a year. As a boy, he enjoyed hunting birds and monkeys but has never killed peccaries or other large game. As a teenager he married a Kichwa woman with whom he today has seven children. While his parents' generation are primarily monolingual speakers of the Waorani language, Wareka speaks Waorani, Kichwa and Spanish. After working for several oil companies, he was among the group of young men who established the official Waorani political organization in the early 1990s. As a result, he spends several months at a time working and living in the regional capital. In his home village he has been elected to various community offices and is active in local school events. Wareka speaks of his father and other senior kin with

admiration, as people who live *durani bai* ('like the ancient ones'). He praises his father's ability to live on his own in the forest and never failing to return home with meat. On occasions when Wareka is able to provide large amounts of fish, game meat or goods procured in the city, he often compares himself to his father providing monkeys and other meat for his family and neighbours. He explains that he is able to work hard because, as a child, his father whipped him after peccary hunts. During school vacations Wareka regularly takes his children to visit his parents' distant hunting lodge, where his father joins the young men on fishing trips and enjoys entertaining the children with his storytelling in the evenings. While Pego and Wareka's relationship appears relaxed, friendly and informal, both men understand that Pego prefers to live away from the village and often decides to leave without consulting his son's family.

Dabo, who is 22 and unmarried, grew up in the largest Waorani village and is the third oldest of nine siblings. His father grew up on the mission in the 1960s and is today one of the few remaining Waorani active in the local evangelical church. Dabo was among the first Waorani to graduate from the new village high school, speaks Spanish fairly well, and often goes by the name Juan. He is a skilled fisherman and also enjoys dancing to Ecuadorian pop music. Since graduating, Dabo has worked on temporary contracts to clear roads for oil companies. He says that the work, in addition to providing wages, allows him to visit friends in the eastern part of the Waorani reserve. Dabo also makes frequent visits to the regional capital where he sees relatives, shops for clothes and occasionally joins friends to local bars and dance clubs. Despite his experience in the city, he says he is uninterested in becoming involved in the Waorani political organisation and instead aspires to study business or tourism at a university in the capital.

When in his home village he stays with his parents and younger siblings, with whom he has a close and relaxed relationship. Dabo often describes his father as a skilled hunter who, like his ancestors, is able to kill monkeys, peccaries and other large game. He seldom accompanies his father on hunting trips, but occasionally joins him on group peccary hunts near the village despite never having killed large game himself. At times Dabo insists that he will soon establish his own longhouse deep in the forest, where he and his older brother will live and hunt “like the ancient ones”. At other times he speaks of his desire to become an oil company truck driver and to travel abroad.

The contrasting life experiences of these three men illustrate how the roles and expectations of Waorani men have changed considerably from one generation to the next. While these masculinities have been produced in radically different historical contexts, they emphasize a common ideal of autonomy and providing game meat associated with being “*durani bai*”. It is striking that peccary hunting is a particularly important expression of manhood for men of all three age groups. Waorani people make strong symbolic associations between hunting peccaries and killing people in warfare (Rival 1996). In previous times peccaries were among the only animals hunted with the same type of spears used for killing humans and there remains a link between killing peccaries and the admired strength and bravery of men who have killed people. Some of the most impressive household stories are about the fortunes and misfortunes of men hunting peccaries. In recalling past hunts, they describe the act of killing large animals and collectively eating and sharing the meat as *durani bai* and *waponi* (pleasing) activities. Peccary hunting is today emblematic of a form of masculinity idealised by young men, despite the fact that few have themselves speared a peccary. They show great interest in

these hunts and tend to know who has killed a peccary and who has not, much like they know who has killed a human enemy. When older men return to the village with a dead peccary, an adult woman may whip its body with her hands or the dull edge of a machete. Treating the dead animal in this way is said to bring luck in subsequent hunts and prevent other peccaries from invading manioc gardens.

The fact that both peccaries and (in previous times) children were whipped after the hunt suggests a degree of perceived continuity between people and peccaries familiar to studies of animist and perspectivist cosmologies (Descola 1994; Viveiros de Castro 1998). In everyday life, Waorani jokingly compare human behaviour to that of peccaries, such as leaving behind a muddy path in the forest when large groups travel together. I suggest that the perceived parallels between killing people and peccaries have contributed to peccary hunting being a key index of Waorani masculinity for young men today. Whereas most living male elders and ancestors are known to have killed people in warfare, and many of the men who grew up at the mission settlement in the 1960s are credited with having speared peccaries (and not people), few young men today have killed animals or people with spears. And yet, for teenage and young adult men whose parents converted to Christianity and all but ended the revenge-killing vendettas of preceding generations, peccary hunting is a privileged *durani bai* activity by which masculinity is envisioned.

The ways in which the current generation of young men embrace peccary hunting as an expression of masculinity can be seen in the exaggerated or completely embellished stories they tell about killing peccaries. On one occasion a young man named Nunki approached my house carrying a massive white-lipped peccary over his back. That

morning, about a dozen men had raced down the river in canoes after a local man spotted a large herd crossing the river upstream from the village. After dropping the animal on the ground in front of the house, Nenki explained how he and the other men tracked the peccaries to a swamp where several animals were trapped in the mud. As is typical of hunting narratives, he demonstrated the movements of the flailing animals with body gestures and mimicked the noises made by the peccaries. The account culminated with Nenki shooting two large animals and subsequently giving one of them to his relatives. I later heard from two older men who participated in the hunt that Nenki's story had been almost completely contrived; he had little to do with killing the peccaries, having trailed behind the lead group of armed men and arrived only after the animals were killed. Apparently Nenki received the animal he carried to our house from another hunter who killed two peccaries and had more meat than he needed. I later discovered from Nenki's close relatives that he has in fact never killed a peccary himself.

Another young man described to me how his marriage to a Kichwa woman required that he provide her parents with several baskets of game meat. After hearing his stories about tirelessly hunting peccaries, tapir and other large game, I later discovered that his senior male kin actually did the hunting because the young man was unable to kill peccaries himself. Just as young adult men attempt to position themselves as *durani bai* in embellishing these stories about peccary hunting, male teenagers claim that their experiences of being whipped as children have made them stronger than younger siblings who they say were not whipped.¹⁴ In these contexts, young men associate themselves with the assumed strength, endurance and knowledge of older men, even if they admit to not having carried out a number of *durani bai* practices themselves.

Violent Imagery and Masculine Fantasy

Of course, peccary hunting and warfare are not the only measure of Waorani manhood. To understand the seemingly contradictory ways in which Waorani masculinities are envisioned and produced today requires consideration not only of Amazonian cosmology and generational changes, but also the experiences of young men in broader political, economic and intercultural relations. This is because young Waorani people, especially men, spend an increasing amount of time in Ecuador's frontier cities and because mass-media sources are becoming more readily available within Waorani communities. These contexts contribute to the production of new masculine fantasies that draw on both popular film imagery and notions of ancestral continuity.

The characters young people see in popular Hollywood films are among the diverse images and practices they describe as *durani bai*. Films have become more accessible in the past decade with the arrival of televisions and video players in Waorani communities. Violent action-adventure movies are especially popular and attract large audiences to the few homes equipped with electric generators. As a result, many young Waorani are as likely as North Americans to be familiar with actors such as Jean-Claude Van Damme, Sylvester Stallone and Jackie Chan.¹⁵ At the time of my primary fieldwork between 2002 and 2004, *Rambo II* was the most popular movie among young Waorani men, who were fascinated by imagery of violence in film. After viewing scenes of Rambo killing people in the jungles of Southeast Asia, they compared his ability to trick and kill enemies from hidden positions to their own ancestors, describing him as *durani bai*.¹⁶ While watching a Rambo film, a male teenager explained to me that, upon finishing his studies at the village school, he planned to move to a remote part of the

Waorani territory where, like his ancestors and Rambo, he would live “free” in the forest. Statements like these often emphasized an ideal of autonomy and independence from larger settlements and *cohuori* people, as well as a desire to live in “traditional” longhouses (*durani onko*) and hunt game with spears and blowguns used by elders.

Bruce Lee and the martial arts are another popular masculine image, particularly for the male teenage students who stay at the school boarding house in the largest Waorani village.¹⁷ At the time of my fieldwork, they hung Bruce Lee posters and painted Chinese calligraphy copied from the packages of videos onto the inner walls of the building.¹⁸ Martial arts fighting became popular among young men to the extent that the students’ residence was transformed into a martial arts clubhouse. In the household where I lived, a teenager decorated the wall with posters of Bruce Lee, which he placed next to a small wooden spear and a feathered crown. When asked about the images and objects displayed on his wall, he described them as “*durani bai*” and explained that his ancestors refused to become “civilized” and live in villages like the Waorani today. He said that like Bruce Lee, they defended themselves fearlessly against many enemies. Other young men involved in the martial arts club evoked similar comparisons in describing their fighting abilities as “*durani bai*”. Without assuming that young men see in Rambo or Bruce Lee practices that they envision carrying out themselves in the future, the imagery in these films resonates with an idealised form of masculinity that young people describe in reference to previous generations. Much like their parents killing peccaries and their ancestors killing enemies, these images suggest a form of manhood characterised by autonomy, strength and endurance in the face of physical danger.

The enthusiastic reception of violent imagery like Rambo by young men is not uncommon around the world, especially among populations with historical or first-hand experiences of war (Kulick and Wilson 1994; Richards 1996; Wood 2006). However, whereas male youth in Sierra Leon, have been described as seeing these images as “tools for the active construction of their own modernity” to be emulated in actual warfare (Richards 1996:105), young Waorani men emphasize the continuities between Rambo and an idealised form of masculinity associated with their ancestors. Despite this emphasis on generational continuity, such a cultural ideal of masculinity is itself a product of historical transformation. As Dorothy Hodgson’s (1999) study of Maasai masculinities demonstrates, colonialism, missionaries and tourism campaigns have all had a role in the historical production of masculinities that emphasize ‘warriorhood’. Young Waorani men, who interact with mestizo Ecuadorians on a regular basis, draw in part on popular imagery of the ‘wild’ Amazonian Indian when they compare themselves to Rambo. I suggest that violence in film is attractive to these men because it constitutes what gender theorists have described as a “fantasy” of masculine power. The notion of fantasy is useful here in pointing to the sense of what kind of person an individual wants to be and how he or she wants to be seen by others (Moore 1994:66). While voicing plans to engage in specific acts of physical violence is very rare in Waorani communities, images of Bruce Lee and Rambo appear to embody a fantasy of masculine power and generational continuity which young men both idealize and fail to demonstrate in everyday life. In this context of shifting male roles, masculinity is produced out of multiple, co-existent discourses and images that speak to the widening gap between how gender is constructed culturally and how it is lived by the present generation of young

men. As we shall see below, this tension is particularly relevant to the experiences of Waorani men who migrate to urban areas.

Not all Waorani appear to place the same values on practices described as *durani bai*. Like the men who praised Bruce Lee and Rambo, a man in his early 20s explicitly contradicted the general cultural emphasis placed on victimhood when he described to me how his paternal grandfather was a brave warrior who speared one of the most famous Waorani killers in the 1950s. Just as the imagery of violence that attracts young men differs from the emphasis on suffering and victimhood in narratives told by older generations, men and women place themselves differently in relation to the past. While for young men, masculinity is associated with the perceived strength, violence and autonomy of their ancestors, feminine agency is more closely associated with the creation of interiority out of differences. Women at times also make comparisons between violent movie characters and their ancestors, but are less inclined to praise imagery of Rambo and Bruce Lee. This is not because older generations or the past in general are associated exclusively with “masculine” practices. While killing people and peccaries is an unambiguous expression of masculine agency, other practices described as *durani bai*, such as the collective consumption of plentiful food and generously hosting visitors, are associated with both men and women.

The ability to provide for visitors in the home and at village-wide feasts (*eëme*), though less exclusively gendered than warfare and hunting, is more closely linked to female agency. For example, the production of manioc beer (*tepe*) – a key element in the Waorani diet and an expected feature of visits between households - is clearly demarcated as the realm of women. Women brew this drink by masticating boiled manioc

roots (*kene*) to make a thick pulp (*keë*), which is later mixed with water to be served.¹⁹

The transformational power of manioc beer is evident in the Waorani notion that its repeated consumption over time leads to household members sharing a single, distinctive body. Since the making and serving of manioc beer is one of the few exclusively female activities, women can be seen to have a central role in the creation of internal consanguinity, just as masculinity is more closely associated with relations of exteriority in which men become detached from the social body, such as in warfare and uxorilocal marriage practices (Rival 2005). Despite the contrasting capacities associated with women and men, my adult informants often emphasize the necessity of both male and female activities for tranquil marital relations and the production of children.

Alongside accounts of past violence and victimhood, the oral histories of Waorani men and women also reach back nostalgically to an idyllic past when related households invited one another to drink massive amounts of manioc beer together. These events continue today in festivals sponsored by schools or entire villages. In addition to making and serving manioc beer at these events, women sing songs that emphasise closeness and solidarity between different Waorani communities. These songs have an explicit role in welcoming visitors and emphasizing alliance and friendship between the hosts and visitors. Whether through providing manioc beer and songs for outsiders or familiarizing in-marrying men into their natal households, women's agency is characterized by the ability to incorporate and transform exteriority into interiority and thus constitute the household group. These understandings of gendered agency support the broader assertion from masculinity studies that manhood should be considered in terms of relations between women and men (Brandes 1980; Gutmann 1997). However, rather than asserting

masculinity and femininity as gendered oppositions, Waorani men express their gendered forms of agency in relation to previous generations and *cohuori* people and images. It is perhaps for this reason that emerging masculinities are not generally predicated on explicitly gendered antagonisms and seldom lead to male violence against women.

Urban masculinity: Gender in Crisis?

Like in many other parts of the world, the gendered experiences of men and women in Amazonia have changed dramatically as indigenous people become increasingly involved in wage labour and the market economy. In drawing comparisons between Amazonia and Melanesia, Bruce Knauff (1997) describes how emerging idioms of modernity and aspirations to acquire commodities contribute significantly to gender antagonism and inequality. He suggests that as men earn cash and prestige through wage labour and urban political leadership, women's roles in agriculture and domestic life are devalued in relation to the cash income of men. Contexts like these reveal that femininities and masculinities are never static, but instead "formed and reformed through interactions with broader historical processes and events" (Hodgson 1999:125). As Hodgson argues, the shifting nature of gendered experiences suggests that masculinities should be understood not only as historical, but also multiple and contradictory.

This approach is important for understanding how the experiences of Waorani men have changed considerably in the past few decades, even beyond the general transition from warfare to relative peace. The vast majority of young men above the age of about 18 have at some point left their communities to work for oil companies or at the Waorani political office in the regional capital. As their expected roles outside the home

have transformed from that of killers and hunters to students, oil workers and politicians within just a couple of generations, it appears that the lives of men have changed to a greater degree than those of women. The emphasis many Waorani place today on being “civilised” (*civilizado*) and living in a “community” (*comunidad*) stands in contrast to stories about young men in the past being trained in the methods of spear-killing.

Although women’s lives have also changed considerably in the past 40 years, there are few if any gendered practices associated with previous generations that Waorani women are today unable to carry out. The establishment of larger villages with schools and the decrease in inter-group violence have probably expanded the possibilities for feminine agency as a broader range of outsiders, including former “enemies”, are incorporated more readily into kinship relations and household visits. While older women lament the difficulty of producing manioc and other garden foods in past times when revenge-killings demanded constant relocation, younger adult women often proudly describe how they serve plentiful amounts of manioc beer to their guests. Even if men’s involvement in the wider national economy and indigenous politics has increased women’s domestic labour burden, it can equally be said that Waorani men are less successful than women in terms of fulfilling their expected gendered roles.

To some extent, oil development and political activism have become part of a new masculine ideal for young men. There is a growing expectation that boys should attend school, learn Spanish and eventually work for wages. In contrast to previous generations in which elders arranged marriages between cross-cousins in their early teenage years, parents have explained to me that their male children should work for oil companies to earn money before marriage.²⁰ Young men tend to agree with their parents on this issue

and generally attempt to avoid marrying until reaching their 20s. In this context, masculinity is seldom stated against a notion of “tradition”, but is instead cast much in the same terms as older adults providing abundance for their household. Whether as oil company employees or urban politicians, young men are expected to bring large amounts of goods from the city back to their family and community. This expectation is particularly strong for men who are elected to positions in the Waorani organization.

While some men achieve a degree of prestige through wage labour and politics, this process has also contributed to a “masculinity crisis” for many young men. This is because the roles of young men have changed in ways that reveal their diminishing ability to demonstrate particular forms of masculinity associated with previous generations. Insofar as feminine agency is associated with the creation, regeneration and expansion of the group, women have become increasingly successful in fulfilling their expected gendered roles in the decades since mission settlement – a period marked by wider inter-group alliances and rapid population growth.²¹ Men, however, even when successful in urban politics and wage labour, are compared in various ways to past generations of killers and successful hunters. Waorani political leaders, who are almost exclusively young men, face criticism from their kin when they fail to satisfy the expectation that they generously provide large amounts of goods obtained from external (*cohuori*) sources. When they fail to provide generously enough, they are contrasted to elders and ancestors who are said to have shared large amounts of game meat for their household and neighbours. These men come to be seen by their male and female peers as becoming more like “outsiders” and are described as *cohuori bai* (“like non-Waorani people”).

Part of the way young men respond to this situation is through negotiating contracts with oil companies. Enkeri, a man in his late 20s who has worked at the Waorani political office for several years, explained to me the difficulties of reconciling urban living with the expectations he faces in his home village. He complained that, in contrast to life in his home community, where his kin provide food for each other without payment, one needs money to live among *cohuori* people in the city. Enkeri lamented that his low wages make it impossible for him to provide the wealth of manufactured goods that his kin have come to expect of him. Despite having participated in a number of protests against oil development on indigenous lands, this same man proudly explained to me his role in signing an agreement with an oil company that will provide school and health supplies to his home community.

These contexts reflect Knauf's (1997) suggestion that, through wage labour, men come to be measured increasingly in terms of the cash and commodity goods they provide for their families. However, this process has not generally led to the gender polarity and antagonism anticipated by theories of an emerging global hegemonic masculinity based on male domination (Moore 1994:62). Spousal abuse remains extremely rare and is a much criticised practice that Waorani associate with *cohuori* Ecuadorians. Women are not expected to be subordinate to their husbands, nor has female sexuality become commodified or noticeably more restricted. Even as it is generally young men who are elected to leadership positions within the official Waorani political office, women continue to have an active role in voicing their opinions and influencing decisions in local political debates. Conflicts in Waorani communities are very rarely voiced in terms of gender oppositions. Like men, women complain that

indigenous leaders are selfish not because they are men, but because they fail to demonstrate an ideal of generosity expected of both men and women.

Urban indigenous politics can be seen in part as an extension of the Waorani logic that, just as female agency is associated with creating, expanding and regenerating sociality within Waorani communities, a specifically masculine agency is expressed through relations with *cohuori* “outsiders”.²² Rather than having mutually antagonistic gendered roles in their engagement with broader political and economic processes, men and women can be seen to demonstrate distinct capacities based on indigenous Amazonian notions of gendered agency. In the context of recent social transformations and urban migration, crisis and antagonism are instead expressed primarily in terms of generational differences and inter-ethnic relations that put the masculinity of young men in question. This is not to suggest that Waorani gender relations are entirely equal, harmonious or unchanging. As we have seen, the roles of men have changed considerably in recent decades, and it remains to be seen whether the multiple masculinities produced in ever-expanding Waorani villages and in urban inter-ethnic contexts will lead to a more pronounced gendered hierarchy in the future.

As gender theorists have suggested more generally, young Waorani men inhabit a world of multiple, contradictory and constantly shifting masculinities (Cornwall and Lindisfarne 1994). They increasingly find themselves in urban contexts where, in the eyes of other Ecuadorians, they embody a specific image of masculine warriorhood. Although unable to demonstrate many local *durani bai* practices, when in the city these men sometimes embrace their allocated position as “wild” *auca* warriors in popular Ecuadorian imagination (High 2009b). Much like the body ornamentation that has

brought indigenous Amazonian people greater attention within the global ecological movement (Conklin 1997), imagery of violence is an important element of Waorani political engagement and participation in public folklore performances in the regional capital. When young men appear at these events semi-nude and carrying long hardwood spears, they both assert Waorani autonomy and strength in the face of powerful outsiders and adopt a specific colonial image of the violent forest-dwelling *auca* Indian (High 2009). Just as they celebrate stories about peccary hunting, images of Rambo and the idea of superhuman “uncontacted” relatives living “free” in the forest, performing as *aucas* in front of mestizo Ecuadorians and tourists confers a form of masculinity that is increasingly elusive in the villages where young men grow up. In these urban settings, the Amazonian warrior becomes yet another element of masculine fantasy for young men who themselves describe their dress and performances as being “like the ancient ones”.

Indigenous Amazonian notions of gendered agency are today only part of the lived experiences of Waorani people, especially for men who stay in the regional capital for months or years at a time. Some of them befriend mestizo Ecuadorians and join them in drinking sessions and the male sexual banter familiar to studies of masculinity elsewhere in Latin America (Brandes 2002; Gutmann 1996; Wade 1994). Young Waorani men say that drinking at bars is an important part of being “amigos” (friends) with mestizos and other Waorani men in the city. In these urban environments, what Knauff describes as the emergence of “a new collective life of male fraternity” can be seen in relations between Waorani and mestizo men. These friendships, coupled with popular stereotypes about Waorani violence, have placed young men at the crossroads of contradictory forms of masculinity. Even as leaving one’s household was an important

part of becoming a man in previous generations, young Waorani men today find themselves in a position where they must negotiate the demands of their home communities and the social expectations of urban Ecuadorian sociality.

While male bonding in urban areas does not appear to have led to the devaluation of women or strict gendered oppositions, the transformation of Waorani masculinity supports the claim that these contexts reveal “palpable tensions between customary and contemporary constructions of male worth” (Knauff 1997:240). Whereas “male worth” in Waorani communities is measured in terms of a man’s ability to demonstrate autonomy, provide abundantly for his family and engage in productive relations with *cohuori* people, the expectations of urban mestizo masculinity tend to emphasize sexuality, gender hierarchy and solidarity between men through the collective consumption of alcohol.²³ Without attempting to draw an all-encompassing contrast between (“egalitarian”) Waorani and (“patriarchal”) mestizo masculinities, it is clear that the manhood of young Waorani males is measured differently in urban areas than in their home communities. It is the tension between these different measures that leads me to describe the experiences of young Waorani men in terms of a masculinity crisis. Increasingly, Waorani men fail to satisfy specific expectations of manhood both locally and in the city. While they lack the “hard” bodies that enable older generations of men to hunt with spears, they are also seen as lacking in key aspects of mestizo masculinity. Waorani political leaders, who come from villages where alcoholic beverages have only recently become available, are said to be unable to handle social drinking, often ending up belligerently drunk on the streets at night. Even as their folklore performances are

consistent with mestizo Ecuadorian expectations of “wild” Amazonian Indians, in everyday life young Waorani men fail to fulfil the expectations of urban masculinity.

Conclusions

Anthropological studies of masculinity often point to the challenges and contradictions men face when their identities and practices are “out of synch with those regarded as “traditional” in some sense” (Viveros Vigoya 2004:28). In contrast to questions of identity and sexual antagonism that have preoccupied much writing about gender in anthropology and beyond, the gendered experiences and fantasies of young Waorani men point a struggle to reconcile urban Ecuadorian masculinities with the idealized forms of manhood associated with previous generations of Waorani men. In specific contexts, such as the village martial arts club and urban folklore performances, young men are able to emulate the practices they attribute to elders and “the ancient ones”. And yet, the expectations of peaceful conviviality in contemporary Waorani communities and emerging forms of inter-ethnic male fraternity in urban areas have transformed the ways in which masculine agency is produced and performed. It is in this context that new generational masculinities have emerged that draw both on Waorani notions of gendered agency and broader Latin American constructions of manhood.

In challenging the tendency to assimilate “indigenous” histories to “Western” history, anthropologists have become increasingly sensitive to the ways in which our informants posit their own ways of being in history (Fausto and Heckenberger 2007, Gow 2001). However, this does not imply that we should ignore the ways in which “indigenous” ideas and practices are themselves products of broader political and

economic histories that involve non-indigenous people. Some of these processes involve power relations that challenge indigenous Amazonian formulations of personhood and agency. While anthropologists often draw on the concept of agency to describe various forms of individual self-realization and opposition to domination (Mahmood 2005), the gendered and generational experiences of young Waorani men do not suggest the power struggles and gendered antagonisms familiar to critical feminists and studies of resistance in subaltern studies. I hope to have shown that, in the context of Waorani masculinities, exploring these broader relationships and transformations does not preclude recognizing the agency and creativity of Amazonian people themselves. Rather than approaching these changes only through the lens of indigenous Amazonian cosmology, this article has attempted to understand how contemporary Waorani manhood is made and remade through increasingly global media imagery and inter-cultural relations. These cultural settings demonstrate that masculine fantasies of power draw on multiple gender discourses rooted in indigenous Amazonian understandings of gendered agency, local oral histories of violence, global media and the national imagination.

Even as would-be warriors and peccary hunters are today becoming oil workers and urban political leaders, the continuing transformation of Waorani masculinity has not led to the degree of violence and gender antagonism between men and women predicted by theorizations of a global hegemonic masculinity. Without implying that Waorani sociality is fixed in time or entirely egalitarian, the urban experiences of young men reflect Amazonian notions of gendered agency that associate women more closely with interiority and men with exteriority. Despite this apparent continuity, we have also seen important changes in the expression of Waorani masculinities that reflect Suzanne

Oakdale's observation that our informants' depictions of inter-ethnic encounters "draw both on foreign terms and concepts and on indigenous forms of self representation" (Oakdale 2004:69). While previous studies of "men as men" demonstrate that masculinity is often constructed and performed in opposition to women (Bourdieu 2001), what is striking about the case I have described is how Waorani masculinities are seldom constructed explicitly against or even in reference to femininity. This is not to ignore the important differences Waorani and other Amazonian people envision between women and men. Since masculinities are always a product of historical transformations, it remains a possibility that urban migration, inter-ethnic relations or other processes will lead to more hierarchical gender relations in the future. However, Waorani manhood today is produced more explicitly in reference to generational and inter-cultural relations. In this context, elders, ancestors, mestizo Ecuadorians and Bruce Lee constitute the multiple masculinities through which they express their own ways of being men.

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¹ The Spanish term *mestizo*, meaning literally “mixed”, refers to a broad category of people of mixed European/Amerindian descent in Latin America. In popular Ecuadorian usage it generally denotes the majority of people who do not identify themselves as indigenous people.

² Since Amazonian bodies are produced through conviviality and the collective consumption of similar substances (Vilça 2005), it is no surprise that masculine agency is conceived as being created and enhanced by specific bodily processes. In some cases of warfare in Amazonia, for example, a killer is said to experience an infusion of the victim’s blood into his stomach (Viveiros de Castro 1992), a substance that must be converted from external ‘enemy’ potency into masculine agency through specific ritual practices (Conklin 2001). This work not only exemplifies how ‘predation’ is a central idiom for relations of alterity in Amazonia (Viveiros de Castro 1996), but also indicates that predatory relations involve specifically gendered practices that enhance the body’s development.

³ The term ‘auca’ is also used in popular Ecuadorian Spanish, where it has a similar connotation of ‘wild’ forest-dwelling Indian.

⁴ This event subsequently became one of the defining moments in 20th century evangelical missionary lore and the theme of dozens of popular Christian books published in North America and Europe. For examples of missionary writing on the Waorani see Wallis (1960, 1973), Elliot (1957, 1961) Kingsland (1980), Liefeld (1990), and Saint (2005).

⁵ As recently as 2006, a Christian-inspired feature film about Waorani spear-killings and missionary involvement, entitled *End of the Spear*, was released and viewed by millions of Americans in cinemas across the country, making the Waorani part of an even wider cultural imagination (High 2009a).

⁶ The organization was originally established as ONHAE (*Organization of the Huaorani Nationality of the Ecuadorian Amazon*) and has since been replaced by NAWA, which stands for the *Waorani Nationality of Ecuador*. See Zeigler-Otero (2004) for an in-depth history of the organization.

⁷ The generational differences and experiences I examine in this article certainly vary between Waorani villages, some of which differ considerably in terms of their size and history of interaction with national and international institutions. Although much of my fieldwork was carried out in the western part of the Waorani ethnic reserve, where the vast majority of Waorani live, my conclusions are also in part drawn from visits to other areas and urban fieldwork with Waorani from many different communities.

⁸ Waorani adults explain that, despite targeting specific men, these attacks sometimes involved killing entire families either as a result of extreme anger or as a strategy to prevent potential counter-attacks by survivors. In some cases surviving women and children were abducted and incorporated into the attacking group.

⁹ Inter-ethnic marriages between Waorani and Kichwa people are increasingly common and appear to be somewhat less stable than marriages between Waorani spouses. These marriages, most commonly between Waorani men and Kichwa women, appear to evidence a shift from the “brideservice model” toward what Collier describes as the “equal bridewealth model” (see Collier 1988:71). Inter-ethnic marriages generally involve a Waorani man and his family bringing money, food or other gifts to a Kichwa bride’s household. In most cases, upon marriage the bride resides patrilocally with her Waorani in-laws.

¹⁰ The names *tageiri* and *taromenani* refer to the few highly nomadic groups living in the Waorani reserve who refuse village settlement and contact with non-Waorani people and Waorani who live in permanent settlements (Cabodevilla 1999). Many Waorani describe them as distant relatives with whom they lost contact during the mission period.

¹¹ Several anthropologists have described how corporeal modifications and inscriptions mark subjectivity and social position in Amazonia (Santos Granero 2009; Turner 1995). Vilaça (2005) suggests that Amazonian cosmologies locate point of view and memory in the body.

¹² Rival (2002) makes a similar observation regarding Waorani views on dietary changes leading to weaker bodies.

¹³ I have used pseudonyms for all personal names mentioned in the present article.

¹⁴ I sometimes heard these claims from sons of the same parents who on other occasions explained that they had never whipped their children.

¹⁵ Most of these English language films are either dubbed in Spanish or have Spanish subtitles.

¹⁶ They also compared the tropical forest in the film to their own homeland (*monito ome*).

¹⁷ Oakdale (2005) also notes the increasing popularity of martial arts among the Kayabi, an indigenous group of the Brazilian Amazon.

¹⁸ Young people buy the videos and posters while on trips to the city.

¹⁹ Unlike the other indigenous groups in Amazonian Ecuador who allow the manioc beer to sit and ferment for several days, Waorani women normally discard the remaining pulp within two days of mastication, resulting in a virtually non-alcoholic drink that is consumed relatively quickly.

²⁰ This phenomena is also related to the growing frequency of inter-ethnic marriages between Waorani men and Kichwa women, which generally requires a form of bride-price to be paid by the groom to his father-in-law in cash, meat or manufactured goods. Some men say they work for oil companies specifically for this purpose.

²¹ The total Waorani population has increased from approximately 500 in the 1960s (Yost 1981) to more than 2000 today.

²² This is not to suggest that the experiences of Waorani women outside of their home communities are culturally or politically insignificant. Since the time of my primary fieldwork, the Waorani Women's Organization (AMWAE) has been established in the regional capital, with the support various NGOs and a US Peace Corps volunteer. The organization has focused particularly on bringing together women from several communities to organize the production and sale of Waorani handicrafts in a city shop.

²³ As Gutmann (1997:402) warns, there is a tendency in academic and popular writing to assimilate all Latin American masculinities to a common narrative of sexist 'machismo'. My intention here is not to over-generalize about Ecuadorian men, but instead to highlight some of the key differences between Waorani and broader mestizo ways of being men in the frontier cities of eastern Ecuador. Many of the mestizo men and women in Ecuador's growing Amazonian cities have migrated from highland coastal regions of the country in the past two or three decades.